

LEARNING ABOUT COMMAS

1

What are commas?

They look like full stops with a tail. They are *always* aligned with the bottom of the letters.

;

Show comma sitting on line (mark line as dots)

2

Commas are used to mark short pauses.

Pic of Billy going to school

Pause

Pause

On the way to school, Billy stopped at the park, played with his

Pause

Pause

skateboard, stopped at the bakery to get a doughnut, which he

Pause

Pause

shared with Alex, but because of the delays, only just got to class

as the bell rang.

HINT: You can have as many commas you like in a sentence. You can only have one full stop (at the end).

3

What are the major uses of commas?

Use of commas (1)

To separate words in a **list**

Billy's mother asked him to go the supermarket to get butter, flour, eggs, milk, cheese and bread.

Pic of Billy and his mother

RULE: You don't put a comma before the word 'and' – so the second last word in this list has no comma.

4

Use of commas (2)

To separate **adjectives**

Mary-Jane is a sweet, intelligent, hard-working, considerate girl.

Pic of Mary-Jane

RULE: You don't put a comma before the word 'and' – so if the series of adjectives includes 'and' (eg ...considerate and loving girl...), there is no comma before it.

5

Use of commas (3)

To separate **clauses**

Mary-Jane came to class, went up the front of the room, said 'This is my favourite song,' then played her violin, while everyone listened in silence.

Pic of Mary-Jane with violin

HINT: Clauses are separate ideas, always with **a verb**, which together make up a complex sentence. (See unit on sentences for more detail.)

6

Use of commas (4)

To separate **the name of someone addressed** from the rest of the sentence

'This is my son, Billy.'

'I want you, Billy, to come out the front and show me your work.'

Pic of teacher and Billy

7

Use of commas (5)

To separate **a single word (or name) inserted** into a sentence

Billy wants to play ball. Mary-Jane, *however*, would rather read.

Let me introduce my friend, Mary-Jane, whom I'm sure you'll like.

Pic of Mary-Jane

HINT: The following words are also in this special category: yes, no, please, thank you, even so, nonetheless.

7

Use of commas (6)

To mark **the end of a quotation** *inside* a sentence

'Billy, stop that at once,' said the teacher. 'Come here,' she added.

Pic of Mary-Jane, Billy and teacher

HINT: There is another unit explaining quotations in detail.

8

Getting it wrong with commas

The greatest danger with commas is to forget the rule about 'and'.

Mary-Jane collected her sports uniform, her coat, her laptop, her books, and her bus pass.

Cancel/wrong sign over this

Mary-Jane collected her sports uniform, her coat, her laptop, her booksand her bus pass.

NOTE: Because of the 'and' there should **not** be a comma after books.